

# A Dragon Thieves Life

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Summary: On the other side of the meridian, a family is uprooted and forced to move, all because the mother couldn't keep her pact with a dragon. Three years later, the Dragon Thieves are back, and as they resurface, so does a mysterious child, found afloat on the back of a dead dragon. Living with them, and forced to pick up their ways, how will Ann fare when she is offered freedom.

## 1. Prolouge

Alright people, this is a second upload of mine, had to remove the first since it was both badly written and didn't seem to catch anyone's attention \*\_sigh\*. Also I would like to say that all reviews are welcome, you know the drill. Preferably constructive reviews, I know that this is a short prologue but it gets better, and fun reading! :D

**\*\*DISCLAIMER:\*\*** \*\*The only thing I own are my own OC's. The video's belong to the DreamWorks. \*\*

### Prologue

The Dragon Thieves - sounds like a nasty bunch don't they? Well, I had grown up around them, so to me, they were family. It didn't matter that they only liked me when I showed how well I could control a dragon. Or that they would whip me over some of the smaller stuff. I thought it was normal; that every other kid lived in a ship filled with dragons, and was taught the very same lessons I was taught, and actually obeyed.

I was taught that the only way a dragon would listen to you was by force. It didn't matter that they didn't attack me when I would pat them as I passed from one end of the ship to another. It didn't matter that they never even spewed flames in my direction. I was taught to fear dragons. To make sure that they never got out of line, because if they did; nothing would keep them from keeping you out of the way of their freedom, even if it meant killing you.

The whole time I spent on that ship. I only lost control of two dragons. One had been because of someone bashing into it while in a race. I had been knocked half off the saddle, and because the dragon was newer, it saw its opportunity to escape. I fell into the ocean below before it could take off with me still on its back. That was a bad night for my back.

The usual small thing whipping was one or two, maybe three whips, but that night, I had received twenty three before passing out. The second time was worse. Drago and his son Roth'Var had been watching us compete, it had almost been the same thing as last time, but I was able to regain control, until someone's dragon began spewing fireballs. I had to jump from the Nightmare I had been on as the flames raced up its hide.

That time, I had been forced through around or above forty lashes, every time I would pass out, they would force me awake and begin again. The only reason they had been so mean that time, was because Drago and Roth'Var had been there, he brought out the harsh side in everyone. Most days were a fight against some sort of pain, most small annoying pain, but it all lead up to resisting the larger pains and being able to function under extreme conditions.

Since I was the youngest there for quite a long time, nobody was sure how to deal with me, and I learned after a few years that if I couldn't get it myself, I should stay quiet till I could. It was probably around age ten that they brought in the first timber jacks to ever be caught. It was with not that first one, but the second one they caught that I found a certain allure to. They caught a total of three timber jacks in the time I was there, and I named all three.

Of course they had seen me taking a liking to the second Timber jack and that raised more concerns from them, more of the usual 'If you don't break them, they will kill you.' speeches. Of course, being who I was, I believed them, but my childish desires had me going against every rule they had lashed into my mind and body.

It was a late night and a cold one at that, so very few people were outside of the boat, making it easier for me to run around topside without being caught. My breath crystallized in the air like a frozen curtain of stars. The hangar that they kept the dragons in was warm and thawed my chilled nose in no time. I made sure to tiptoe down the hanger, calling out to the few dragons I had names for and could remember. The farther in you went, the colder it got as you got closer to the exit.

"Daisy, Jade, Rose, Jasmine, Dale, Jack." Those were the only ones I could remember and probably the only ones I liked. That night I just sat in front of his stall and watched him, curious if he knew the human language, if they had the ability to speak if they so wished to. Childish thoughts, I named him that night, not because of the type of dragon he was, but because of the way the cold crept up and over his scales and covered him in a thin blanket of ice crystals. The only reason this was possible was because he and the other two Timberjacks were at the end of the hanger, and never seemed to emit heat like the others - they never seemed bothered by the cold. His name was Frost, and he was the first dragon I took a liking to, but certainly not the last.

## 2. Chapter 1

All reviews are welcome, you know the drill. Preferably constructive reviews, I know that this is a short prologue but it gets better, and longer. Have fun reading! :D

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**\*\*Chapter 1\*\***

"Woo, faster boy, faster!" I screamed into Frost's ear as he dodged dragons, riders, and weapons alike. The world tilted and I found myself hanging upside down in the saddle. I took the chance and threw three dulled knives. They hit the targets, but didn't cause any damage. I laughed as one fell off their dragon, and the other looked behind him to the instructor following him, who signaled he was dead.

This was one of the weekly games we had to play, games that made us move quicker, think faster, and gave us more knowledge on how dragons ride, and react. My name is Ann, and by now, I'm probably around the age of eighteen or so. Been on this ship my entire life, and I still don't understand why most of these people were so...dull. They never cheered for one another, they only ever screamed out insults. They never did anything just for the fun off it, and if they did, it was something that usually involved people getting killed.

It was all things I had seen before and it all seemed boring and dull, something that was a part of your everyday life, I wasn't aware that killing just cause they looked at you wrong would end you in jail, nor did ever realize that the kinds of things that went on, on these ships could put them all at the execution block.

One of the many things I did know however, that if there was ever a chance to get out of here, with as little consequence possible; I would take it without hesitation. Sure these people were technically my family, I suppose, but I knew for a fact that they weren't and I was more than happy to leave all the violence and rage here. I was granted that very opportunity three weeks later.

Although a week before hand, I had almost snapped and lost that opportunity. I had been walking back to my room and was stopped by one of the men we had picked up on our travels. He had been alone and wandering around as if looking from something but unsure as to where to begin looking. He had been watching everyone while he had been here; word was he had bribed the captain to keep his life.

This man had come to me, saying I was the weak link, how I was a simple girl that I didn't belong, said he knew I didn't want to be here. He was the reason I had almost snapped, the way he spoke to me was degrading in all manners possible and he didn't seem to care that what he was saying was only feeding the flames. Instead, he continued on and on about it, and when I pulled out my knife and advanced on him, is when he changed the subject hastily and without a single stutter.

I had him against the wall, my goal set on carving out his tongue first, so as to never allow him another word. When he mentioned we were nearing a large Viking village, and it held a famous dragon rider and his family. He said he had already told the captain and they were altering the route, but he also said, it would be a fight where anyone could disappear, for good.

I shoved him against the wall and sheathed my knife, to allow him to explain himself. The rage in me calming, I found myself scratching at suddenly red nails. He began a lecture on the types of dragons he was hoping to see, and I lost interest. As I walked away, he suggested to me, that I bind my friendship with Frost, and make ready to leave at a moment's notice. I didn't let him know I had heard him and was frightened that he knew I had something over my dragon other than fear.

I began taking small portions of dried food and gathering all the medical supplies I could get my fingers on, which was a lot mind you. Pulling out and repacking clothing, trying to find the best ones that suited any climate and would wear the longest. It was as I was passing the training ring that I saw what I needed the most.

It was one of the new riding suits, only the best got to done them when fighting was to be done. It was a leather suit dipped in black dye, green strips outlining the beginning of the metal portions. Basically it was a thin leather suit with metal plating from the hands up to the shoulders, from the ankles up to the thighs, and a thin row along the back to protect the spine. How they got the metal that black, I didn't know and it was something I hoped to learn before I left.

The suit was said to keep you warm even in the coldest of waters, and cool in the hottest smoke filled volcanos. The only problem being, if your dragon didn't match the colouring of your fly suit, you could been seen and killed easier. This is why I spent the rest of the week trying to find the right dye to match the scales on Frost.

It took me a good four days of experimenting and painting on Frost to find the correct colour. Another day to get a fly suit out of the hanger without anyone seeing, and the rest of the week switching the suits colour from black, to a light green brown. The metal was easy to paint on, but didn't keep the paint well. So instead, I scratched markings into the metal, since I only had a day to wait till we reached this village; I had more time than I thought too lazy around.

As it turns out, the metal was not made black, but was scorched, so when I scratched long enough, the shiny sliver of metal shone through. That last night I spent on the ship, I sat on my bed and looked at the suit, and couldn't look away. The swirls and designs I had etched out in boredom, all looked as if they had been place on purpose. Before I laid my head on the pillow to rest, I packed the suit away, sad to see the blank space on my wall, only to remind myself that if I escaped, I would be able to wear it all the time.

I woke with a start as the ship rocked and tried to stay floating. The roars of sleeping men awaking showed this had not been planned. I grabbed my pack out from under the bed, setting it next to the end table. Making a show of getting dressed so as to keep anyone that entered to question why I was not topside yet.

By the time I finished, most everyone had already run topside or was running to and fro, so I had no issues as I ran with my pack on my back to the dragon hanger. Placing the pack securely under the saddle, someone came screaming down the halls, something about a pack of night furies and the dragons attacking the ship. My hands moved quickly over the saddle as I threw myself into the saddle and let Frost take over, he wanted out worse than I did.

The moment he was out I saw what the man had been yelling about. The dragons swarmed the ships like bees around honey. As I opened the hanger doors, I was tempted to let the other dragons out, but I just didn't have the time or I would have. It was as I climbed into the clouds, low enough to see what was going on, but high enough not be spotted easily, I saw the night furies. There was only three of them, two large ones and a smaller one, the smaller one most likely a child.

As Roth'Var and Drago lead the dragon army, I saw with no empathy as Dragon was knocked off his dragon and fell a very, very, long way to his death. I soon lost sight of the fighting as I urged Frost to climb higher and higher into the clouds. From the sounds of it, Roth'Var had been winning even with the disadvantage he had been given, but now, he was losing.

As the sounds of dragons and metal clashing faded, I found my mind wandering and watching below. Frost was exhilarated with his newfound freedom, and I laughed in joy as he dived and ascended and dove again. His joy was contagious and soon had me standing and holding onto the saddle just to make it more fun for both of us. Not once did I fall or doubt Frost.

### 3. Chapter 2

#### **\*\*Chapter 2\*\***

I let Frost go the moment I had him unsaddled, it wasn't fair to have him under my control if he didn't wish to be. He was off faster than I had thought possible, leaving behind a path of trimmed trees. For three more years I wandered the earth, learning through practice and ear the things I know now; Medicines and pressure points, seen unknown animals and learned to walk by the stars.

Through those three years, it was mostly living on my own, a few times I was granted the presence of a dragon, few stayed longer than a few moments to watch me. But there were a few who stayed for several days, allowing me to chase and play with them. Using them instead of a fire, but never allowed me to climb into their backs. They were all wary of me simply because of how I smelled, or at least, that's how one of the village elders said it when I passed through.

It was a rare thing to cross a village and it happened as often as I found a dragon that would follow me, and by now, people didn't attack the dragons and strangers who entered their villages. It was odd, I would always stay on the outskirts of a town for a little while, watching them, fearing they would know I had been with Drago and his dragon thieves and chase me out and away.

It must have been all the years in the woods that made me less ok with the things the dragon thieves had done, the raiding, the enslaving and killing of dragons. The more I learned, the more I realized how messed up it had been on that ship. I didn't have a name for myself yet, but I was trying, helping people with small errands, and big ones.

The first village I stumbled upon was only after a few months in the woods. This village had a dragon issue, they weren't so keen on having dragons within the village, but allowed me, on the account that I helped them get rid of a whispering death, who was always snatching up their sheep from underneath their noses. Although, I soon found out it was not the dragons fault and only their hate for it.

The tunnels were dug by hand, to look like a whispering death tunnel, all these tunnels never went far, and never started from the same spot, which had me thinking it was a large team of bandits, using the village's hate of dragons allow them to continue to steal their livestock. The village wasn't satisfied when I brought back a gang of ten unconscious bandits on the back of the Nadder who had been with me at the time, but their hate subsided a few weeks later when no more of their sheep disappeared.

It was a week afterwards that that very Nadder left for whatever reason. Four months later, I passed by a downed dragon, its wing torn and its front left leg lame. It took a long time for the wing to repair, but it did, and the moment it could fly, it was gone like the two before. It was a whole year before I found my third one. It was only a newly hatched monstrous nightmare, and while it was cute, it didn't like me trying to show it how to fly.

It learned quick and stayed near me longer than the others, out of curiosity, a feeling of gratitude, or debt? Maybe even simply enjoying my presence. Whatever it was, I found the dragon to be a good travel companion. He wasn't big enough to even try to ride, and I doubted he would let me, but he was small enough to stand on my shoulder for a while before becoming too heavy, and could keep up with me without making too much noise.

It was a cute little thing, but it took a lot to feed it and soon I had to teach it to feed it's self as it became too hard to find enough food on my own for it. This was one of the things I found hard to do, since I wasn't sure how dragons hunted on their own. I taught it to the best of my abilities and thankfully it learned at least how to fish on its own.

Three years it took me to get as far as I had, Three years, it had taken me, to gather all the skills I now hold. Three years, it took me to reach the isolated town of Berk.

It took me a good full day of walking the length of the woods that stood to the north of the village, and at the rising of the new sun, I stepped outside of those woods, only to be chased back in.

I had seen the Nadder coming and had hoped for it to stop, but when it kept running at me; I turned and climbed as high and fast as I could into the nearest tree. Something feel through the trees and I was surprised to find a sheep falling, where the rider of the Nadder sat, waiting for it to finish it's falling. The rider looked around

even after having the sheep on the Nadder, as if she had seen me but was unsure of what I had been, animal, or intruder.

By this time I had reached Berk, I was once again alone, the monstrous nightmare had grown and left before sunrise one morning, and because I was alone, I felt less likely to give away my position than if I had a dragon companion to back me up. The rider was a blond, and female, she was dressed in what seemed like wool and metal, it was an odd combination of but it fit her.

She was still sitting there as if I was dumb enough to get down from the tree and talk to her. Then someone yelled and her head turned back towards the area she had come from. I heard various snippets, things like Black Sheep, Hiccup, and Race. Odd things that made very little sense to me, but the girl seemed excited and urged her dragon back out into the open in excitement.

Her excitement had me curious, what was this thing they were having, a race with dragons? I looked between the branches and got to watch something I had never seen before. It was a night fury, with a rider, and it had a black sheep. Behind the night fury was a dragon I had never seen before and I watched it in fearful curiosity.

Its scales were a brown orange, a complete contrast to the blue-brown colouring its rider wore. It had four wings, and it seemed to have a large fan behind its crown. It was chasing the night fury, that much was obvious, but to think such a small dragon could outfly a dragon almost three times its size was also interesting. The rider was dressed in a full leather fly suit that had no colour on it at all. The only colour seemed to be on its dragon's tail.

This race got more interesting as a Zippleback flew up next to the night fury, one head distracted the rider, while the other spewed gas into the face of the night fury, who dropped in an attempt to remove it's self from the cloud, which would have been great, had they not already been flying so low.

The dragon clipped the roof a hut and I groaned, I could only imagine how much that would have hurt. The dragon seemed to struggle to stay air born, and I figured out that what I had thought a flag was actually an artificial tail for the dragon. With its rider knocked askew, it wasn't able to maneuver correctly, and I could see the invisible flight line that would end somewhere near their village center.

I slid down the tree as fast as I could, grinding my teeth as my feet impacted with the ground. I wasn't sure if they would need help, as well as my curiosity being a large motivator, I ran to help the dragon and its rider as they disappeared behind a few huts, and second later crash landed into something metal.

As I came around the corner, I saw that what they had crashed into was at least two days worth of fishing. Most of the fish seemed to be all over the ground and on the huts, yet when I went over to the large fish basin, I saw that more than half was still in there. As well as a dragon, with its rider struggling to stay upright in the fish.

"These kinds of thing happen often here?" I said as I tilted my head as I watched him try to climb out on his own, the night fury simply

shook himself off and jumped out. While the man continued to struggle and after a few more seconds of watching him struggle, I offered a hand and was surprised that he needed no other help than my outstretched hand to pull himself out.

When he pulled off his helmet, I had to say, he looked better up close than he did from up in the clouds. The dragon circled me once and sneezed, causing the man to look at me. Usually a sneeze is an innocent thing, but the thing is, dragons don't sneeze unless they recognize a smell from something big, like a war.

"Not usually." He answered, wiping the fish slime off onto his suit. "The other thing that doesn't happen often is someone visiting the island of Berk, by land no less. Most people come in on boats, or dragons." He continued as he hooked his helmet onto the saddle of his night fury.

"Well I'm not good with boats, and I couldn't fly if I wanted, no dragon. So I choose to visit the famous village of Berk by walking here." I said as I crossed my arms behind my back, If I were to tell him, I could guarantee that every Viking here would be on me in seconds, and there would be no begging for my life, the only problem was, I was a terrible liar.

Since I didn't have a dragon I could hop on if I got into trouble, I wasn't about to let it slip either. His dragon sneezed once more, as if to say it was important. I hadn't even realized we had been walking till we stopped. The woods were a good half a minute run away from me, it would take half of that for the dragon to catch me. I was rarely wrong about things, then again, most things could be assumed due to human nature and how it behaves.

How could this dragon even know my scent, hadn't I been careful not to touch ground till at least a day's ride away from the place? As well as the fact that it had decided to keep the scent in its mind.

"Have we met somewhere before, somewhere I would be too busy to remember?" He asked, his dragon walking and standing behind him, not sitting or lying down, ready to chase me, as if it could see how badly i wanted to run. I tried to take small step back, making sure I had a good footing.

"Not officially no." I wasn't going to answer the second portion of that question, and I didn't need too, I could feel the next question that was coming. I might as well as have been Pinocchio for the quality of my lies, typically, under a small lie, my ears turn red and I avoid eye contact. At worst, my words slur together and I speak too fast, as well as constant fidgeting.

"And where would I have met someone like you?" He asked, I looked behind me towards the woods and lowered my voice in an attempt to keep him from hearing the answer that faked its way out of my mouth.

"Nowhere, just in the middle of nowhere." It wasn't really a lie, so I was able to look at him after a second of convincing myself it wasn't a lie. His facial expression told me all I needed to know, he didn't believe me in the least, but he wasn't going to push. Then someone came up behind me and I whirled on them. When I heard the



night fury rider gasp, I panicked and ran.

The chase only lasted seventeen seconds, two seconds longer than I had expected. They were the longest seventeen seconds I have yet to experience. Had I been in the woods, I could have been able to escape, one hundred percent guaranteed. Even from an experienced dragon from the tracker class. When it pinned me face first in the ground, it felt as though I had lost some sort of game.

"Toothless stop! Fishlegs, go get Gobber!" I felt guilt twinge in my stomach for only a second. The back of my neck felt like it was on fire, like it had felt days after being branded. Upon completing initiation into Drago's army, you were branded like cattle to mark you as his, and while I didn't go through this initiation, they still branded me against my wishes as if I was going to run off before I could have gone through it.

When people returned, it was more than just this man called Fishlegs and Gobber. It was the entire village it seemed, at the sight of the branding on my neck, I could hear the whisper of many weapons being unsheathed. Suddenly I was grateful I was face down, and not face up to see the hatred in all of their eyes. Well, this is what I got I guess. Coming to Berk thinking my luck would hold.

I felt more than heard the blade that came to rest millimeters above my neck, the tattoo it's self was a simple design, a diamond shape with a circle, and in that circle, is a crude dragon outline. It was to represent the taming of dragons; to me it looked more like a dragon in a cage. No amount of scratching and scraping had done me any good when I had left, and I had not the courage to use a weapon to try and remove it.

"I thought we wiped them all out!" Someone yelled, as if breaking the silence that had settled on them all. "Where is her dragon, are their more?" Someone else yelled and more noise ensued, pounding at my ears and prying my mouth open.

"I have no dragon, I am alone." It was all I could say before something hit me on the head. It was the handle of some weapon, I could tell that, and I was grateful at least, that it had been the handle of that weapon, and not the other end of it. The darkness was like a comfort blanket that eased my mind, and I allowed it to cover me.

#### 4. Chapter 3

**\*\*Chapter 3\*\***

Hiccup's POV:

My first impression had been a suspicious woman out exploring, only to happen upon our village. That image evolved into a disgusting dragon killer the moment she had turned to meet Snotlout who had been walking up behind her. As I sat there watching her small body twitch and curl in on itself; The image inside my mind evolved once more into a force of a woman not defined by brandings, but by actions. As I stood I checked the levers to make sure none of them could have come lose on accident. They were all tight and stiff like always, which meant only a person, could have been able to release the

dragons.

I didn't want to believe it, but it was just like Astrid to try and help in her own way. Gobber came back in and confirmed it.

"She admits she let them out. She says she had hoped the dragons would have taken care of her." Gobber said as he turned and waited for me to follow, I stand and go to turn around, catching the small tremor that went through the girl's body. The cold nip of the morning air was not likely to leave even at high noon.

As I entered Mead hall, I was forced into a pile of problem, most of them surrounding Ann. People were worried she meant another war like a few years ago. Waving them away tiredly, I went to the war room, which now contained piles of paper mainly only to do with requests for expansion as well as small everyday issues.

It was a good four or five before I could leave Mead hall and go home, grab a wool blanket and make the trek back to the academy. When I got there it was like I had walked into my own execution. The air hung heavy with both dread and fear. Ann's small body making small convulsions on the ground, like someone was kicking her.

When I placed the blanket on her she stopped for a moment and I was going to leave, had she not started to mutter. "Not again, won't happen, not again, won't happen again, leave them, alone." She spoke in broken sentences, her face twisting slightly from confusion to fear and then to calm. Only to repeat the pattern of emotions again.

She didn't speak much more than those words over and over, mostly muttered as if she could keep the pain away by not saying it so loud. As I walked out of the training academy and whistled for Toothless, thoughts invaded my mind of how I was going to fix this, and how I was going to calm the villagers.

The quick ride through the frigid air got my mind working, when I returned home and entered, I found Astrid already arranging dinner, and Kral on the ground sketching out new designs for the races. Even after all these years, it felt as if I was just in my father's body watching me grow up all over again. Astrid's' calling pulled me from my own mind and I closed the door and went to the small table in the back corner of the room.

"Hiccup! Kral! Get your butts in here before your dinner gets cold." She yelled and I felt the days' work falling off my shoulders, just even for a short time I could pretend I didn't have so many problems to solve, and I could enjoy time with my family.

Ann's POV:

The nightmares were horrible; never ending scenarios of punishment I had received and would receive if I was ever found. If I could have awoken, I would have done so, but the level of exhaustion I was experiencing had basically placed me into a semi-coma. Something was placed on me halfway through a particularly brutal one, and I could feel it, it shut the scenario down, but what came after it, made me wish someone hadn't disturbed me. The dreams came faster and more and more brutal than the last, combining ways of punishment and loss in such ways it had my mind reeling and my body trembling. What I didn't

understand, was what was keeping me asleep, even with such need for rest, these dreams were too horrid to keep even my exhausted mind. The thought slipped from my mind as it entered a stage of blissful darkness; it was as though I was sinking through an ocean. Yet the darkness was a comfort and there was no feeling of drowning. My body gave a shuddering sigh and relaxed as my mind slipped into the REM state.

When I awoke, once again the sun was low in the sky, towards a sunset. I found the object that had been laid on me, was a woolen blanket. Not the ropes my mind had turned it into. I turned and my eyes focused on the bars that held a crowd of on lookers, all talking excitedly and a feeling of dread dropped into my stomach. The single seat that was up there was preoccupied by the chief and he looked like he had aged overnight. Hiccup stood from his seat and waited for the crowd to silence.

I stood and began a slow stretch, waiting for whatever horrible news he was about to give. I felt the burning in my limbs, but it wasn't as fierce I had expected it to be, and for that, I was grateful. I had no sprains or cramps, a few bruises, but nothing that wouldn't clear up in a few days. I was even beginning to feel like I was ready to face whatever Hiccup had to throw at me, until I heard what he had in mind.

"In a voting to keep things fair, the villagers of this island have voted in the favour of the dragon thief Ann, with two conditions." I looked at the faces of the villagers crowding against the bars, many of them smiling or grinning, showing that while I was being allowed to live, I was not going to like these conditions. "The first being that she may never return to the island of Berk. The second condition being, if she is able to out run, and out fly the villagers of Berk and their dragons, she may live." That brought all my confidence back down to the ground, only to be stomped on by the pounding feet and triumphant yells of the Vikings. 'Well shit.'

While everyone else roared with approval, the chief looked weary and tired and I couldn't blame him, sounds like he had a hard enough time trying to keep me alive.

"Fine, I accept the conditions, one question though." I asked waiting for them to become quiet and hoping the answer would be in my favour. "Must I ride a dragon given to me, or am I allowed to choose one for myself?" I picked up the woolen blanket and folded it; having a feeling I was going to need it here soon.

"You will be given a choice of dragons and pick one of the ones chosen for you." He spoke and I felt relief going through me, at least I wouldn't be forced to ride Jack again. Then another question came up, it sounded a bit rhetorical but it was something I was unsure of none the less.

"And how far will you be chasing me?" the crowd went wild with this and all I could hear was them chanting, 'till you die' over and over again, something inside of me snapped and broke. While it was only for a second, I felt the need to just drop to the floor and give up, something I had never felt before. The feeling was shoved back and hidden just as quickly as it had come out.

Viking after Viking came in and lined up in front of me, opening the

cages and making sure I didn't try anything funny. I had already ruled out Jack. They pulled out a Gronkle, a Whispering Death, a Nightmare, and a Changewing.

The Gronkle was too big and clumsy, so it was already ruled out the moment she saw it. The Whispering Death was cool, but not a practical dragon for me. The Nightmare was also out, I only rode one large dragon, and I wasn't the most willing to be set on fire by accident. It was the last dragon I choose, the Changewing. It was small enough to be quick to maneuver, young enough that it had yet to hopefully feel the wrath of a whip. As well as seeming to have plenty of vitality and energy.

I stared at it and it returned the stare, it mirrored my movements when I tilted my head and I smiled. I turned around and told them my choice of dragon and they seemed puzzled as to why I had not chosen the more intimidating Nightmare. Maybe this one would stay unlike the others, I didn't raise my hope too much, but it was still there in the back of my mind.

When I went up to it, it flinched at my raised hand I felt a small portion of my heart break, so this dragon had felt the wrath of a whip. The fact that it had very little effect on the dragon's personality lead me to believe this one would have a strong will and a quick mind. I placed a hand on its neck and listened to its body, not caring about the murmurs coming from behind me.

Its body thrummed with a energy, the heart rate was fast and light, showing it's might through speed not strength. I let out a sigh of relief and leaned into the dragon, who gave out a low guttural growl. I stepped back, raising my hands, I had forgotten that this dragon was not yet a friend. The fact that it hadn't freaked and tried to kill me for that, once again raised my hope for escape.

The saddle they threw down to me was more like a harness than an actual saddle. I was glad I was able to keep the blanket and still had the blanket that had been laid on me. It took me mere moments to take apart the harness and try and assemble it as a useable saddle. The half an hour I was allowed, gave me enough time to get a split line lead and a seat that attached to the dragon. The harness around the dragon's chest was still there, as that was what was needed to keep the seat on the dragon. In the time I took to place it on, readjust it, place it back on, and mount and dismount. I had found many things out about it. Its favorite scratching spots, the area's it didn't like to be touched, the fact that it seemed to listen to me while I spoke to it.

The only problem with that was that it allowed the childish thoughts of the dragon being able to actually understand and maybe even respond to me. That single childish thought has me speaking out to the dragon before I could keep it to myself. "Can you actually understand me?" I asked it and watched closely for any indication of an answer. I tightened the harness and let the stillness of the air answer my question.

The wind whipped through the pit and the noise was so loud, I almost missed the small sound of an answer "Indeed I can." When I looked at the Changewing I found that it was hard to believe that I had actually heard a dragon talk, and so dismissed it as me hearing things. In this time I found a name for my new companion, "Bane". The

name seemed to fit the dragon and it shuffled its feet in approval of its name.

As I mounted her for the last time, I quickly found she had the full vocabulary of the barbaric grunts used by the dragon thieves to control dragons. I just hoped she wouldn't throw me from the saddle in an attempt at freedom. The army before me was terrifying, a horde of Vikings mounting dragons from every species and even some I had never seen. Weapons hanging off every one of them, some more 'rusted' than others. Gobber came out and handed me a single pack and when I looked inside my stomach let go of a small knot.

Everything I would ever need was inside this little pack. A small hunting knife, some fish hooks, leather strips, string, gloves, and some dried strips of mutton. I took one of the strips of mutton and threw it to Bane, who snatched it out of the air with precision. When I saw Hiccup all dressed up in his own fly suit, and a smaller clone of him dressed the same standing beside him, my heart stopped. I had been hoping, that out of all the dragons here, the night furies would be the only ones not to participate.

I looked at Bane and saw her watching the Nightfury with simple curiosity, and I wondered how long she had been here. I mounted her gently, hoping not to draw any attention and get a head start on everyone else. "If I'm free, your free. Go." I whispered to her as I leaned down, getting ready to kick her side if she didn't get off the ground. She shook her head and body and I readied the click in my mouth. The command was knocked out of my mouth by the roar that reverberated through her and into me, as well as into every single Viking on a dragon. 'Well there goes my few second lead.'

Bane opened her wings wide and dramatically, giving the only one who hadn't come to attention with her roar time to mount his Nightfury and ready himself. She gave another roar and this time, it was answered by the voices of hundreds of dragons. I felt her body coil and her legs lower, right before shooting off the ground and into the air in less time than it took the Vikings to grab there reins and get there dragon flying. All accept the Nightfury of course. 'Let's start the race then.'

## 5. Chapter 4

**\*\*Chapter 4\*\***

Hiccup's POV:

My first impression had been a suspicious woman out exploring, only to happen upon our village. That image evolved into a disgusting dragon killer the moment she had turned to meet Snotlout who had been walking up behind her. As I sat there watching her small body twitch and curl in on itself; The image inside my mind evolved once more into a force of a woman not defined by brandings, but by actions. As I stood I checked the levers to make sure none of them could have come lose on accident. They were all tight and stiff like always, which meant only a person, could have been able to release the dragons.

I didn't want to believe it, but it was just like Astrid to try and help in her own way. Gobber came back in and confirmed it.

"She admits she let them out. She says she had hoped the dragons would have taken care of her." Gobber said as he turned and waited for me to follow, I stand and go to turn around, catching the small tremor that went through the girl's body. The cold nip of the morning air was not likely to leave even at high noon.

As I entered Mead hall, I was forced into a pile of problem, most of them surrounding Ann. People were worried she meant another war like a few years ago. Waving them away tiredly, I went to the war room, which now contained piles of paper mainly only to do with requests for expansion as well as small everyday issues.

It was a good four or five before I could leave Mead hall and go home, grab a wool blanket and make the trek back to the academy. When I got there it was like I had walked into my own execution. The air hung heavy with both dread and fear. Ann's small body making small convulsions on the ground, like someone was kicking her.

When I placed the blanket on her she stopped for a moment and I was going to leave, had she not started to mutter. "Not again, won't happen, not again, won't happen again, leave them, alone." She spoke in broken sentences, her face twisting slightly from confusion to fear and then to calm. Only to repeat the pattern of emotions again.

She didn't speak much more than those words over and over, mostly muttered as if she could keep the pain away by not saying it so loud. As I walked out of the training academy and whistled for Toothless, thoughts invaded my mind of how I was going to fix this, and how I was going to calm the villagers.

The quick ride through the frigid air got my mind working, when I returned home and entered, I found Astrid already arranging dinner, and Kral on the ground sketching out new designs for the races. Even after all these years, it felt as if I was just in my father's body watching me grow up all over again. Astrid's' calling pulled me from my own mind and I closed the door and went to the small table in the back corner of the room.

"Hiccup! Kral! Get your butts in here before your dinner gets cold." She yelled and I felt the days' work falling off my shoulders, just even for a short time I could pretend I didn't have so many problems to solve, and I could enjoy time with my family.

Ann's POV:

The nightmares were horrible; never ending scenarios of punishment I had received and would receive if I was ever found. If I could have awoken, I would have done so, but the level of exhaustion I was experiencing had basically placed me into a semi-coma. Something was placed on me halfway through a particularly brutal one, and I could feel it, it shut the scenario down, but what came after it, made me wish someone hadn't disturbed me. The dreams came faster and more and more brutal than the last, combining ways of punishment and loss in such ways it had my mind reeling and my body trembling. What I didn't understand, was what was keeping me asleep, even with such need for rest, these dreams were too horrid to keep even my exhausted mind. The thought slipped from my mind as it entered a stage of blissful darkness; it was as though I was sinking through an ocean. Yet the

darkness was a comfort and there was no feeling of drowning. My body gave a shuddering sigh and relaxed as my mind slipped into the REM state.

When I awoke, once again the sun was low in the sky, towards a sunset. I found the object that had been laid on me, was a woolen blanket. Not the ropes my mind had turned it into. I turned and my eyes focused on the bars that held a crowd of on lookers, all talking excitedly and a feeling of dread dropped into my stomach. The single seat that was up there was preoccupied by the chief and he looked like he had aged overnight. Hiccup stood from his seat and waited for the crowd to silence.

I stood and began a slow stretch, waiting for whatever horrible news he was about to give. I felt the burning in my limbs, but it wasn't as fierce I had expected it to be, and for that, I was grateful. I had no sprains or cramps, a few bruises, but nothing that wouldn't clear up in a few days. I was even beginning to feel like I was ready to face whatever Hiccup had to throw at me, until I heard what he had in mind.

"In a voting to keep things fair, the villagers of this island have voted in the favour of the dragon thief Ann, with two conditions." I looked at the faces of the villagers crowding against the bars, many of them smiling or grinning, showing that while I was being allowed to live, I was not going to like these conditions. "The first being that she may never return to the island of Berk. The second condition being, if she is able to out run, and out fly the villagers of Berk and their dragons, she may live." That brought all my confidence back down to the ground, only to be stomped on by the pounding feet and triumphant yells of the Vikings. 'Well shit.'

While everyone else roared with approval, the chief looked weary and tired and I couldn't blame him, sounds like he had a hard enough time trying to keep me alive.

"Fine, I accept the conditions, one question though." I asked waiting for them to become quiet and hoping the answer would be in my favour. "Must I ride a dragon given to me, or am I allowed to choose one for myself?" I picked up the woolen blanket and folded it; having a feeling I was going to need it here soon.

"You will be given a choice of dragons and pick one of the ones chosen for you." He spoke and I felt relief going through me, at least I wouldn't be forced to ride Jack again. Then another question came up, it sounded a bit rhetorical but it was something I was unsure of none the less.

"And how far will you be chasing me?" the crowd went wild with this and all I could hear was them chanting, 'till you die' over and over again, something inside of me snapped and broke. While it was only for a second, I felt the need to just drop to the floor and give up, something I had never felt before. The feeling was shoved back and hidden just as quickly as it had come out.

Viking after Viking came in and lined up in front of me, opening the cages and making sure I didn't try anything funny. I had already ruled out Jack. They pulled out a Gronkle, a Whispering Death, a Nightmare, and a Changewing.

The Gronkle was too big and clumsy, so it was already ruled out the moment she saw it. The Whispering Death was cool, but not a practical dragon for me. The Nightmare was also out, I only rode one large dragon, and I wasn't the most willing to be set on fire by accident. It was the last dragon I choose, the Changewing. It was small enough to be quick to maneuver, young enough that it had yet to hopefully feel the wrath of a whip. As well as seeming to have plenty of vitality and energy.

I stared at it and it returned the stare, it mirrored my movements when I tilted my head and I smiled. I turned around and told them my choice of dragon and they seemed puzzled as to why I had not chosen the more intimidating Nightmare. Maybe this one would stay unlike the others, I didn't raise my hope too much, but it was still there in the back of my mind.

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## 6. Chapter 5

### Chapter 5

Bane headed towards the maze of rocks before I could even turn around and look forward. IN a way, all I was here for was an extra set of eyes and a second brain for judgment. Seeing as how for the moment both our desires were the same, to escape. As the night grew darker, we lost more and more of the pursuers, at the moment only a handful of dragons remained on Bane's tail. Within those ranks, was a Nightfury. As we progressed forward, all but the Nightfury lost us. The first time the Nightfury disappeared, I was ecstatic; it was Bane's reflexes that saved us. The Nightfury had reappeared next to us trying to ram us. In my happy state I would have never been able to avoid it. Bane on the other hand, had known that you couldn't lose this one so easily. She dove under the ram and skimmed the ocean; the spray was colder than some of the winters I had lived through, and just as refreshing.

The next time it disappeared I was more inclined to look to the sides as well as above and below, checking for the dragon and its rider. Of course, in the darkness, I was unable to see where it was, and mainly felt more than saw where it was. As the night wore on, so did Bane,

She began to slow and her reflexes were sluggish. Had I been raised like the dragon theievs had taught me, I would have pushed her till she dropped out of the sky, and while the thought flitted through my mind, I was quick to burn it and look for land.

She began flying closer and closer to the ocean, trying to use the buffer from that instead of flying, I grabbed the reins and pulled them gently to the left, she obeyed without any complaints, I had thought I had seen land, and after a few seconds, I was greeted by a forest with tall pines and a lot of shrubbery. This would be a great place to allow Bane rest while trying to escape the Nightfury.

I landed bane in a large clearing, and quickly lead her as far away from it as I could, looking for dense areas where he small form could go while the Nightfuries slightly wider body could not. When I finally found it, she laid down in a huff and I thanked her, covering her in shrubbery, not bothering to remove the saddle should we need to get away quick. If she stayed around that long that is.

I hid across from her, in the foliage below a large pine, contemplating climbing it and sleeping up there, but I would be easily spotted from the air in a tree. I waited tensly for the dragon to pass through and pass on, but while it did somehow get to the place we were at, it stood there like it knew we were there. My lucky was so not in the good basket today. They stood there for a few more moments before walking forward a few paces, allowing me clear view of Bane again. The others sat down and I heard them setting up something.

When I looked to Bane, she watched me for a few seconds before closing her eyes, that I could understand. Eye shine was what gave many prey away, as well as predators. \_Stays still, don't even breathe too loudly.\_ The voice was inside my head, but it was not one of mine, it reminded me of the voice I had heard in the training put back in Berk. I opened my eyes once more and looked over to Bane, I could no longer see her in the darkness, her eyes had been the only thing I had been able to see.

I wanted to shake my head to remove the thought that Bane had talked to me, but I was afraid to make any noise. So I closed my eyes and attempted to sleep. It wasn't the best one I had ever had that was for sure. My few years out here in the wild was the thing that allowed me to have fitful nightmares and still move very little. The thing that woke though, was not my nightmares, it was the feeling of someone behind me.

I opened my eyes and saw a pair of green cat eyes staring back, too big to belong to any cat, only could have belonged to a dragon. I wanted to gasp, and would have, had a pair of thick hands not closed around my throat and constricted my airflow. I couldn't even manage a squeak, so I took a leap of faith and screamed out for Bane and the Nightfury to help me, and got nothing in return.

A clammy darkness began to fill my mind and I couldn't even do anything to stop it. My mouth filled with a cloying taste and I started to kick, no longer caring about the amount of noise I was making. As a last ditch attempt I began to flail around, feeling something collide with a fist and a grunt that followed.

The green eyes were fully focused on me now, it sat there unmoving,

uncaring, as I was strangled. Had my lungs had any oxygen in them I would have given a growl in frustration. The knowing that no one was going to help me, let alone the fact that I couldn't help myself was worse than the nightmares I had. So I let go and allowed the blackness creeping through me to fill every vein as I gave in.

I woke to the sickening familiarity of a rocking ship, the room I was in even matched the room I had been in for so long. I swung my legs around to the edge of the bed I had awoken in. I looked around, trying to find something that would disprove what my aching head was telling me. On the bed across from me was a boy about my age, sleeping with his back to me. I eyed him warily and saw nothing that I could recognize, he must have been the one riding the Nightfury.

I walked slowly to the door, opening it and finding a guard posted outside of it. He turned and looked at me the moment he heard the door open.

"Who's ship is this, and who brought me aboard." I mainly wanted to know who had gotten me back into this nightmare. He looked at me and smiled, I recognized him but I didn't have a name to match to his face.

"Welcome back Ann, this is the remaining fleet of the dragon thieves. We are happy to have you back." He said as he leaned against the wall, his voice bringing his name back to me, Rye, his name was Rye. One of the closets things I had had for a friend here. My shoulders sagged in relief and I gave a sigh. It was my time to shine, as they would say in a theater.

"Drago's back? This is some of the first good news I have heard in a long time." I pull the door closed behind me, I wouldn't want the boy to get the wrong impression. I leaned against the door hopping the boy wouldn't wake up till this conversation moved away from the room or ended. "Am I on lockdown? Or can I leave the room?" I asked as I tried to piece together my thoughts. If Drago truly had lived, I was either going to be stuck here for another long time, or I was going to have to find a way to end the cycle, and quickly.

"You're allowed out, but the boy isn't." Rye nodded to the room and I gave a quick nod in understanding.

"I have a few more questions then I will be out of your hair. Where did you guys take the dragon I was riding, it was a Changewing." I asked as I stepped away from the door, giving a glance out the window across from me to see we were surrounded by water, great.

"In the hanger, which you're not allowed in." I paused at this piece of information, that wasn't good.

"What do you mean, not allowed into? Also, who choked me out, back on land." I asked rubbing my neck, it was still sore and I could feel the bruises forming, they wouldn't be pretty. We were making a slow walk around the deck as we spoke, I had yet to even see another person. Although the fact that I wasn't allowed into the hanger concerned me more than who had choked me out.

"Mark did, he carried you all the way back to the ship back too, seems he has a thing for you. Also, you're not allowed in the hanger for two reasons. First of all being the stolen fly suit, the second

reason being the fact that you left your post and flew off into the battle three years ago." Rye seemed more upset about the part about Mark than the other portion of me leaving the battle when I was needed.

The thing that made me happy was the fact that they didn't know I had been trying to escape. I wouldn't be alive if they had. No doubt the punishment for this alone was going to be very hefty.

"So, what's the damage." I asked heavily, knowing that no matter how bad I had had it before, this was going to be even worse. The 20 lashes for simply failing, was still fresh in my mind, along with the pain.

"Well first things first, I'm going to ask you to return the fly suit, cool designs though. I will tell you after." I hadn't even realized we had made a full circuit already. He handed me a pile of clothes that was the same as everyone else aboard this boat. I took the clothes and returned inside of the room, making sure the boy was sleeping still before turning my back to him.

As quietly as I could, I undressed and folded the fly suit, dressing as quickly as I could, I realized I had a problem. The fly suit was designed for males, and since it was, the chest area was tight enough not to need any undergarments. The problem now being, I was being given clothes that had nothing for my chest. Moaning in distress I checked the table next to me for some gauze, it would be the best I would be able to use for now.

Holding the shirt I had been given close to me, I turned slightly and cursed, the boy was wakening and watching me, I swiveled around and felt raw fire race across my body, mainly my face. I heard the quick intake of air and I left no time for my illogical portion of my brain to kick in and make issues for me. I think I would have rather taken a few lashes than face this embarrassment.

"Could you check the end table next to your bed." I heard the end desk open, and the sound of a few items moving around, before he realized I hadn't told him what I needed.

"What is it your looking for?" a single pause "Are those from-!"

"I need the wraps!" I said hurriedly, cutting him off. His voice was still gravelly from sleep and while it was cute, I didn't feel like dealing with the fire racing up and down my face and neck for much longer. Much less have to explain my scars to him. The coming punishment would explain all of it better than me trying to sit here and explain it. Three rolls of wraps landed on the bed, and my face got hotter before the words were even out of my mouth.

"Face the wall, and don't turn around till I say you can." I turned slightly to watch him shift and turn, facing the wall as I had asked. I turned around and dropped the shirt, unrolling the wraps and quickly binding my chest, years of practice allowed me to be done in seconds. The shirt slipped over my head with the same smell and scratchiness as I remembered it, the smell made my stomach knot; I could smell blood on this one.

"You done?" He asked and I sat there trying to swallow the bile in my mouth.

"Yea, go ahead and turn around." I said, standing and sitting on the bed. I folded the metal on top of the fly suit, waiting for the burning to fade. He opened his mouth to speak but I beat him too it. "From now until I find a way to get out of here, you are to pretend you know nothing about me, not that I came to Berk, not that I am a dragon Thief not even my name, I am a stranger to you. Also, if you want to live, don't talk to anyone, don't look at anyone unless they talk too you first. Welcome aboard to the Dragon Thieves fleet." With that he turned and sat on his bed, sliding himself to the very edge, watching me.

Taking a breath, I continued "You're not allowed to leave this room, so don't try. Also, if you're lucky, you will get your answer about my back tomorrow, or even as early as later today." I stood and left the room before he could even blink and think about responding.

End  
file.